

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 WELLINGTON 01722

FOR: CINCPAC FOR USICA ADVISOR
USICA FOR PGM/RC

EO 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION NEUTRON BOMB, RHODESIA

1. ON APRIL 6, THE CHRISTCHURCH "PRESS" IN ITS SECOND EDITORIAL UNDER THE HEADING "THE NEUTRON BOMB," COMMENTED:
2. "THE NEUTRON BOMB IS A HORRIFYING WEAPON AND THE REVULSION WHICH HAS BEEN EXPRESSED ABOUT ITS POSSIBLE PRODUCTION IS WIDESPREAD...
3. "THE ASPECT THAT HAS CAUGHT PEOPLE'S IMAGINATION IS THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB IS SAID TO KILL PEOPLE BUT LEAVE BUILDINGS INTACT. THAT IS NOT ENTIRELY TRUE, BUT IT IS TRUE THAT THE EXPLOSIVE FORCE NEEDED TO PRODUCE A LARGER AMOUNT OF RADIATION WOULD NOT DAMAGE AS MANY BUILDINGS AS A CONVENTIONAL NUCLEAR WEAPON. BUT EVEN WITHOUT THAT QUALIFICATION THE DILEMMA REMAINS: IS IT MORE MORAL TO KILL PEOPLE AND LEAVE BUILDINGS INTACT OR TO KILL PEOPLE AND DESTROY BUILDINGS? THE CONCLUSION MUST SURELY

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BE THAT ORDINARY NUCLEAR AND NEUTRON WEAPONS ALIKE ARE HORRIBLE AND NUCLEAR WARFARE IS IMMORAL.

4. "THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN AT PAINS TO PLAY ON THE SENSIBILITIES OF THE WEST OVER THE NEUTRON BOMB. THE FACTS ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB ARE THEMSELVES ENOUGH TO UPSET THE FEELINGS OF MANY WESTERNERS, BUT THE SOVIET UNION HAS DONE

WHAT IT CAN TO KEEP THE ISSUE ALIVE. APART FROM THE FACT THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB WOULD BE DIRECTED AGAINST SOVIET FORCES, WHICH WOULD GIVE THE SOVIET UNION REASON ENOUGH FOR COMPLAINT IN ANY CASE, THERE IS A SPECIAL TACTICAL PROBLEM IT PRESENTS TO WARSAW PACT FORCES.

5. "THE WARSAW PACT FORCES HAVE SOME 16,200 TANKS IN EUROPE AT THEIR DISPOSAL COMPARED WITH THE 6,300 AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION. THE NEUTRON BOMB (OR 'ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPON' OR 'REDUCED BLAST WEAPON' AS SOME WISH THEY HAD CALLED IT) HAS THE ABILITY, THROUGH RADIATION, TO PENETRATE THE ARMOUR OF WARSAW PACT TANKS, MAKING THEIR SUPERIOR NUMBERS OF LESS SIGNIFICANCE. IF THE SOVIET UNION WERE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT 'INHUMANE' WEAPONS, THIS CONCERN HAS YET TO BE REFLECTED IN A RENUNCIATION OF HUNTER-KILLER SATELLITES IN SPACE, OR IN HALTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHEMICAL AND GERM WARFARE WEAPONS.

6. "ON STRATEGIC AS DISTINCT FROM MORAL GROUNDS, THE FIRST CONCERN OF PRESIDENT CARTER MUST BE THE EFFECT OF A DECISION TO DEVELOP THE NEUTRON BOMB ON THE PENDING STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS. ALLIED TO THAT CONSIDERATION, HE MUST ALSO DECIDE WHETHER THE AVAILABILITY OF THE NEUTRON BOMB WOULD BE LIKELY TO MAKE NUCLEAR WAR MORE OR LESS LIKELY.

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7. "WOULD MILITARY COMMANDERS, CONSIDERING THE ADVANTAGES OF CONFINING DAMAGE TO A SMALLER AREA, BE MORE LIKELY TO SEEK THE USE OF THE WEAPON, AND BEFORE THE WORLD KNOWS WHERE IT IS, A NUCLEAR EXCHANGE IS UNLEASHED? THESE ARE MOMENTOUS CONSIDERATIONS - AS MOMENTOUS, PERHAPS, AS THOSE PONDERED BY HIS PREDECESSOR, PRESIDENT TRUMAN, WHEN ASKED TO AUTHORISE THE USE OF THE FIRST ATOM BOMB 33 YEARS AGO."

8. THE SAME DAY, THE DOMINION, WELLINGTON'S MORNING PAPER DEVOTED ITS EDITORIAL SPACE TO RHODESIA, UNDER A HEADING "CAREFUL ON RHODESIA," COMMENTING:

9. "BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES ARE ENGAGED UPON SOME TRICKY, NOT TO SAY DANGEROUS, DIPLOMACY TO RETAIN A ROLE FOR THEMSELVES IN A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT. MEANWHILE, MR SMITH HAS SIGNED AND SEALED AN AGREEMENT WITH THOSE BLACK NATIONALISTS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH HIM...

10. "LONDON'S AND WASHINGTON'S CONCERN SPRING FROM GENUINE FEARS OF AN ESCALATING GUERILLA WAR THAT COULD BRING IN THE RUSSIANS AND THE CUBANS. MR NKOMO AND MR MUGABE CONTROL SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF GUERILLA FORCES WHICH

HAVE BEEN FIGHTING THE BREAKAWAY COLONY'S FORCES FOR FIVE YEARS. THEY HAVE THREATENED TO TURN THEIR GUNS ON THE POLLING PLACES IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS THAT WILL ENFRANCHISE 3,500,000 BLACKS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

11. "THE DANGER IN THE PRESENT LINE OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN POLICY IS THAT IT WILL HARDEN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT'S INTRANSIGENCE BY PROMOTING ITS IMPORTANCE. LONDON AND WASHINGTON ARE FEARFUL BECAUSE TO DESERT THE FRONT MAY

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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 WELLINGTON 01722

FOR: CINCPAC FOR USICA ADVISOR

USICA FOR PGM/RC

BE TO THROW THE GUERILLA MOVEMENT INTO RUSSIA'S ARMS. YET TO PERSIST IS TO THREATEN TO WRECK THE REASONABLE SETTLEMENT ALREADY NEGOTIATED IN SALISBURY.

12. "LITTLE ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE EXISTS. NEVERTHELESS, LONDON AND WASHINGTON SHOULD NOT DISREGARD THE POSSIBILITY OF SIGNIFICANT FACTIONS WITHIN THE LOOSELY GROUPED GUERILLA MOVEMENT OPTING TO GO ALONG WITH THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT." ANDERSON

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